

This Is Your Brain On Drugs

Authored by
mohammad looti

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This Is Your Brain on Drugs was a large-scale US anti-narcotics campaign by Partnership for a Drug-Free America (PDFA) launched in 1987, that used two televised public service announcements (PSAs) and a related poster campaign.

1987 version

The first PSA, from 1987, showed a man who held up an egg and said, "This is your brain," before picking up a frying pan and adding, "This is drugs." He then cracks open the egg, fries the contents, and says, "This is your brain on drugs." Finally he looks up at the camera and asks, "Any questions? A shorter version of this, simply showing a close-up of an egg dropping into a frying pan, was used a few years later.

The PSA was so popular that Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare spoofed the PSA with Johnny Depp, (who appeared in the first Nightmare on Elm Street movie.) The PSA goes on as normal until Robert Englund (who plays Freddy Krueger) hits Depp with the frying pan and says, "Yeah! What are you on? Looks like a frying pan and some eggs to me."

1998 version

The second PSA, from 1998, featured then 18-year-old actress Rachael Leigh Cook, who, as before, holds up an egg and says, "this is your brain", before lifting up a frying pan with the words, "this is heroin", after which she places the egg on a kitchen counter - "this is what happens to your brain after snorting heroin" - and slams the pan down on it. She lifts the pan back up, saying, "and this is what your body goes through", in reference to the remnants of the egg now dripping from the bottom of the pan and down her arm. She then says, "It's not over yet" and proceeds to smash everything in the kitchen with the frying pan, saying, "And this is what your family goes through! And your friends! And your money! And your job! And your self-respect! And your future!". She ends with "And your life". She finally drops the pan on the counter of the now-wrecked kitchen, and says, "Any questions?"

The commercial was directed by Eden Tyler. It was written by Ken Cills and Doug Hill, who were working at the New York ad agency, Margeotes, Fertitta and Partners.

Impact

TV Guide named the commercial one of the top one hundred television advertisements ever. Internet comedian Nostalgia Critic poked fun at both advertisements in his Top 11 Nostalgic Drug PSAs video. In response to the girl destroying the kitchen, he answers the question by asking one of his own: "Yeah what the hell kind of drugs are you on?!"

The second version was parodied on Robot Chicken, in which the girl goes on a psychopathic rampage, ending in her arrest.

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